

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE  
KING'S BENCH DIVISION

B E T W E E N

- (1) LEEDS BRADFORD AIRPORT LIMITED
- (2) LONDON LUTON AIRPORT OPERATIONS LIMITED
- (3) NEWCASTLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LIMITED
- (4) NIAL SERVICES LIMITED

Claimants

-and-

- (1) PERSONS UNKNOWN WHOSE PURPOSE IS OR INCLUDES PROTESTING ABOUT FOSSIL FUELS OR THE ENVIRONMENT ON THE PREMISES AT LEEDS BRADFORD AIRPORT SHOWN EDGED RED ON PLAN 1 TO THE CLAIM FORM (WHETHER IN CONNECTION WITH THE JUST STOP OIL CAMPAIGN OR EXTINCTION REBELLION CAMPAIGN OR OTHERWISE) AND WHO ENTER UPON THOSE PREMISES; AND PERSONS UNKNOWN WHO PROTEST ABOUT FOSSIL FUELS OR THE ENVIRONMENT ON THOSE PREMISES (WHETHER IN CONNECTION WITH THE JUST STOP OIL CAMPAIGN OR EXTINCTION REBELLION CAMPAIGN OR OTHERWISE)
- (2) PERSONS UNKNOWN WHOSE PURPOSE IS OR INCLUDES PROTESTING ABOUT FOSSIL FUELS OR THE ENVIRONMENT ON THE PREMISES AT LONDON LUTON AIRPORT SHOWN EDGED RED ON PLAN 2 TO THE CLAIM FORM (WHETHER IN CONNECTION WITH THE JUST STOP OIL CAMPAIGN OR EXTINCTION REBELLION CAMPAIGN OR OTHERWISE) AND WHO ENTER UPON THOSE PREMISES; AND PERSONS UNKNOWN WHO PROTEST ABOUT FOSSIL FUELS OR THE ENVIRONMENT ON THOSE PREMISES (WHETHER IN CONNECTION WITH THE JUST STOP OIL CAMPAIGN OR EXTINCTION REBELLION CAMPAIGN OR OTHERWISE)
- (3) PERSONS UNKNOWN WHOSE PURPOSE IS OR INCLUDES PROTESTING ABOUT FOSSIL FUELS OR THE ENVIRONMENT ON THE PREMISES AT NEWCASTLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SHOWN EDGED RED ON PLAN 3 TO THE CLAIM FORM (WHETHER IN CONNECTION WITH THE JUST STOP OIL CAMPAIGN OR EXTINCTION REBELLION CAMPAIGN OR OTHERWISE) AND WHO ENTER UPON THOSE PREMISES; AND PERSONS UNKNOWN WHO PROTEST ABOUT FOSSIL FUELS OR THE ENVIRONMENT ON THOSE PREMISES (WHETHER IN CONNECTION WITH THE JUST STOP OIL CAMPAIGN OR EXTINCTION REBELLION CAMPAIGN OR OTHERWISE)

Defendants

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NOTE OF "WITHOUT NOTICE" HEARING BEFORE

MR JUSTICE RITCHIE

18 JULY 2024

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## Hearing 18.07.24

The Hearing commenced at 10.30am.

The Judge had read the evidence (except for Alex Wright w/s #2, which he took a moment to read at the start of the hearing) and the Claimant's skeleton argument, and had received the authorities bundle.

TMKC introduced the case as one under the newly described jurisdiction which has been in the Supreme Court in *Wolverhampton* – sui generis relief against Persons Unknown; no defendants of which Cs were aware and no steps taken to notify.

Mr Justice Ritchie was familiar with the jurisdiction having granted injunctions in favour of HS2 and Esso.

This is an emerging area of law and the principles expressed in caselaw are still in the nature of guidance and the courts are encouraged by the Supreme Court to make decisions as they unfold. The guiding principle that attracts the eye of equity is the "compelling need" which stimulates the court to intervene. The developments of the law and breaking down of headings is what is needed when compelling need is identified, and to satisfy the human rights aspect.

### Preliminary Matters

TMKC explained that, because of *Wolverhampton*, this was not a without notice application in the ordinary sense, but the Cs had complied with it on a precautionary basis for the reasons set out in AW w/s #1 (HB/272-273).

TMKC addressed that the Claim Form + the Particulars of Claim needed to be amended but noted as there is no issue as to service this permission may not be required, nonetheless he sought permission to amend:-

1. the Claim Form (plans attached were not labelled); and
2. the Particulars of Claim (plans were attached to AW w/s but not POC despite being referred to)

Permission granted.

### Witness Statements / Evidence

The Judge noted that para 7 of AW w/s #2 related to protests at Gatwick (no injunction in place) on 24 June 2024.

The Judge noted the arrests that had been made and referred to in AW w/s, but was critical that there was no copy of Mr McBride's witness statement, obtaining it online was not practicable. The Judge noted that it was hearsay evidence.

TWKC provided AW w/s #4 to the Judge (updated Plan 3A).

### Issues

Judge's primary concerns:-

- 1- *Why have the defendants not been named or notice provided to the individuals, they being the ones alleged in the evidence as the guiding light / drum beaters. If they are known to be part of the persuaders then why aren't they defendants?;*
- 2- *General queries concerning clarity of the areas covered by the injunction, highways and third party land etc.; and*

- 3- *Definition of Persons Unknown ("PU") - currently the definition of PU would cover protesting about delayed luggage (for example) – the Judge considered that would be too wide and needs to be more focused.*

## **Titles**

TMKC explained Plan 1 and Plan 1B.

To clarify the Judge's query on C's rights to claim an injunction over a national highway (included within the red line on Plan 1), TMKC explained it would be to restrain nuisance affecting the customers and operations of the airport; the byelaws themselves cover disruptive nuisance over the highway.

TMKC clarified Cs are not asking the court to grant an injunction in aid of the byelaws, and provided examples of terminal cases with injunctions granted over highways.

The Judge considered an example of individuals sitting in the tunnel and stated that it's got nothing to do with trespass. It is a nuisance to interfere with anyone's right with the use of the highway. The nuisance would be that it obstructs the passageway of staff and licences. It could also be framed within the economic torts.

TMKC discussed the runway lights; these are affected by complex tapestry of titles, however, the structures of the lights are owned by the Cs. The Judge considered that the ownership of the land did not matter because Cs owned the lights and there could be a danger if the lights were covered and the planes could not land because they could not see.

TMKC explained Plans 1A – 3A and 1B – 3B; the third party areas should not be carved out and to recognise that anyone protesting in these areas is doing so in the airport and it is not appropriate to try to draw that distinction. There is also potential for protestors to be misled / create confusion.

## **Airports' Distinctiveness**

TMKC explained that airports are not like normal places. Even peaceful protests are problematic and could be used as a mask for more serious things. There is potential for a peaceful protest to become not peaceful and/or to be misinterpreted by security staff. Airports are key national infrastructure. Security is the single most important item on the agenda.

TMKC drew the Judge's attention to VJH w/s on responsibilities of operators (on safety); safety is an issue of huge importance and there is sufficient chain of evidence for the court to accept the submission.

TMKC discussed that the central element of this equitable jurisdiction is that anyone can come and say "no this is too wide" and at that point, there can be arguments about it. At this stage, it is appropriate to proceed on a precautionary basis which is intrinsic to this jurisdiction, at least when there is evidence that it goes beyond mere assertion.

TMKC explains that third party occupiers have been notified and no objections received to the claim.

## **Plans**

### Leeds Bradford Airport

TMKC explained Plan 1A and why internal layout plans of the green buildings have not been provided (complexity).

## London Luton Airport

TMKC explained Plan 2B, Plan 2A (including the highways) and Plans 2C – 2I.

TMKC explained the railway which is within C2's titles / ownership.

## Newcastle

TMKC explained Plan 3, Plan 3B, Plan 3A (as substituted by AW w/s #4) and Plans 3C-3D.

TMKC there has been no uniform practice developed in these cases about whether notice should be given to third parties (e.g. the difference in approach in claims by the MAG group airports with Heathrow).

### **Threat and the compelling need**

TMKC provided summary of incidents AW w/s #1 - the environmental campaign in recent years and also referred to para 52 of AW w/2 #1 (HB/264) - Tweet by Just Stop Oil ("JSO").

Helps to explain why these injunctions are effective. They recognise that injunctions are special, still that much respect for the law.

The Judge queried whether arrested JSO members should be a named individual; TMKC explained that they are no longer considered to be a threat given that they had received sanctions.

TMKC explained that apart from the obligation to identify the name, notification should also be as effective as possible.

Judge was uncertain as to why individuals were not named as defendants where they could be as "troop leaders"; those that can be named, should be named but they should be notified at least, whether they are named is a matter for Cs.

TMKC refers to AW w/s #3 and the JSO letter to the prime minister and the explicitness of their recent statement on *taking action at airports* (HB/591).

### **Specific to the Airports (LBA/LTN/NCL)**

Generic features which make airports vulnerable to peaceful protest which the attempted protest at Gatwick airport with the bandages evidences. The cascade effect of from one cancellation / delay also makes them particularly vulnerable and that they are dangerous places.

At these airports, the lack of airbridges create a special acute level of risk of protestors breaking away because passengers have to cross the apron to get to aircraft and runways are closer to terminals - when the passengers are out in the open, there are additional security risks.

Cs have tried to accommodate protest, there were cornered off protest areas for safe and peaceful protest; Judge proposed a recital in the Order for a contact for peaceful protests.

All the airports are also protected by byelaws which prohibit disruptive protest.

### **Draft Order**

The Judge considered the definition of PU to be too wide "persons unknown whose purpose is or includes protest". The POC centre on protests that focus on fossil fuels. Appropriate wording is required that focuses on the actual substance of the complaint.

Cs have a continuing duty of full and frank disclosure (therefore it would provide to the Court all relevant information if it had to enforce the relief).

*Cuadrilla* – paras 60, 65 and 69 (AB/376) - no objection to framing an order which involves a subjective element. If there is a problem, C would have a duty to satisfy the evidential burden.

TMKC addressed other questions by the Judge:

### **1- Why have we not named individual – covered**

The Judge granted permission to amend stating it will be “as you see fit”.

### **2- Areas covered which were highway and third party land**

TMKC submits that in relation to all third party areas it is necessary to make the injunction effective, the supporting reason that protest activity on third party land and/or highways would be a nuisance, a direct tort. There is the issue of silent protest on third party land which would not be a nuisance, but that is caught by the first, we can't have situations where security need to monitor peaceful protest, not in an airport – elsewhere maybe.

### **3. definition of PU being too wide**

TMKC did not develop further on this.

The Judge suggested adding a note to the order.

TMKC stated that the balancing exercise remains and sought that the Judge evaluates the submissions in light of the skeleton argument.

## **Judgement**

This is an *ex parte* application issued on 16.07.2024 for injunctions against PU to exclude them from 3 airports and for alternative service provisions, extempore judgement fit within that period.

This Judgment is focused on LBA but will apply to LTN and NCL.

The POC identified third party areas over which Cs lacked possession (Plans 1A, 2A and 3A).

Cs set out that:-

- the public had implied consent to enter the airports;
- without any right to protest or such activities as had been threatened by JSO;
- any person entering or staying on for protests would be a trespasser.

Third party areas were identified to which Cs are not entitled to possession but it was pleaded that Cs are entitled to protect their interest.

Protests on third party areas / highways would constitute a breach of the airports byelaws and in submission of this, suggested it would constitute a nuisance.

The Judge identified the various threats of protests as noted in the witness evidence (including at LTN); where the byelaws and breach thereof had no or little off putting effect.

Judge summarised the evidence in AW, VJH, AM and NJ w/ss.

The claimants sought injunctions to be reviewed every 12 months,

**The cause of action:** trespass, public/private nuisance. There is no claim for an economic tort or conspiracy. It is based on *quia timet* as there is no threat of direct action, but there is imminent threat.

Secondly, having looked at the disclosure that was provided in the professional bundle provided by Eversheds I consider that full and frank disclosure has been provided

**Sufficient evidence:** the evidence of ownership is sufficient and that the historic evidence is sufficient for proof of a risk of trespass and of public/private nuisance at the airport or the roads.

**A realistic defence:** That is on the basis of if it is a defence to protesters entering these airports with the intention to disrupt or breach the byelaws, the range of protests that has been used by environmental groups in the past has been very wide, including locking on, damaging structures, spraying paint, sit-ins/glue-ins, and many others. For such activities I do not foresee any realistic defence. I take into account of course that any injunction will be against unlawful activities or in breach of the byelaws.

**Balance of convenience / compelling justification:** is there a compelling reason to grant the injunction - the most relevant event is the threat made to the new Prime Minister of the UK which is comparable to previous threats made, these threats have a history of not being made lightly and such threats being seen through, including trespass, public and private nuisance. The other public and direct activity which has created torts and perhaps crimes, was Stansted and Farnborough, the threat to other airports may have been undermined by substantial arrests including the one relating to the Gatwick bandages arrest.

Airports are part of the national infrastructure which are actually sensitive to threat, they are frighteningly complicated organisations involving the movement of thousands of members of the public near the movement of huge and highly combustible equipment. They are particularly sensitive to direct action/unlawful protest.

Fear of CEOs is that terrorism is facilitated by chaos. Human rights of passengers who businesses or holidays may be catastrophically interrupted or cancelled. Although not pleaded, it is worth taking on the knock on effect on employment, however, I don't have those in the front of my mind because there is no pleading in for economic torts.

JSO and XR have made good on their threats in the past in a way that has caused enormous tax payer and private financial expense and disruptions at oil terminals, roads, sporting events and as threatened, potentially at airports. I also take into account that the evidence before me shows that previous High Court decisions have been effective in preventing unlawful activity. Also take into account the protesters lawful right to express their views, lawful protesting set out in Mr Hodder's statement is the right of every English person and is not to be restricted.

There is compelling justification to prevent fossil fuel protesters from entering or staying at these three airports and from protesting there and from any direction which could cause chaos / danger or constitute the torts set out in the particulars of claim.

**Would damages be an adequate remedy:** Obviously not: (1) PU by definition are unknown; and (2) I do not know of any case in which a PU has stumped up for any chaos they have caused.

I do not think they would go anywhere near to compensate the chaos that could be caused at an airport, for instance, on the tarmac. Therefore, damages are not an adequate remedy. It is better to prevent the chaos than compensate / fail to compensate.

**Identifying PUs:** Needs to include "fossil fuels". It is a duty of this court, to make absolutely clear the boundaries of the definition of PUs and I consider there is a potential

lack of clarity in defining them as protestors. There may be lawful protests that would otherwise be caught by the current too wide definition.

**Scope of the injunction:** I do not consider that there is a compelling justification for the injunction to cover flights going in and out of the airport.

**Injunction:** I consider that this is sufficient but I would add “for the purpose of fossil fuel”, and consent of Cs.

**The geographic boundaries:** In relation to areas within the possession of the claimant and private jet areas, in view of what happened on Stansted, it is necessary that the injunction covers those private operations which are at least within the freehold ownership.

Finally, landing lights – I consider that the injunction should cover the landing lights as they are equipment owned by the Cs and if Ds disrupt it would be extremely chaotic and dangerous.

**Temporal limits:** review annual is sufficient, safe and fair way to protect rights of PU.

**Service:** methods of alternative service, agreed as per draft Order and provided to Reuters.

**Right to vary or set aside:** right should also be granted specifically to Roger Hallam, Phoebe Plummer and/or Indigo Rumbelow, those 3 persons should be served directly by alternative service (website/email address).

**Tidy up matters:** whilst Public Order Act 2023 and Byelaws have changed the landscape somewhat in this application, they do not undermine the need for a proactive approach toward what would be catastrophic tortious damage.

Permission to amend CF and POC.